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Increasing Knowledge and Skills in this Digital, Global Era

with Nick Sauers, Leadership Training coordinator., CASTLE, University of Kentucky

Iam often asked by people who are unfamiliar with one-to-one to describe what it is. However, unlike many other initiatives,

one-to-one is not a canned program. One of the most challenging things when talking to those not currently

involved with one-to-one is communicating how differently it can look at various schools. In actuality, one-to-one simply

implies a student-to-computer ratio and not other changes that may occur in a school. When touring one-to-one schools,

these differences also become very apparent. Penuel (2006) described four outcomes that most one-to-one schools identify

when implementing one-to-one. Those outcomes include:

• improving academic achievement;

• increasing equity of access;

• increasing economic competitiveness of a region; and

• transforming the quality of instruction.

I would add that under each of these points, there are still many more outcomes schools have sought. For some schools,

improving academic achievement has been a focus in one content area while others have focused on different content areas.

For still other schools, increasing academic achievement has meant the adoption or implementation of another strategy to

increase academic performance in partnership with one-to-one.

**So what does this mean?**

Well, for starters, it means there isn’t a cookie cutter plan to lay out for educators considering the move to one-to-one. More

importantly, it hopefully means that schools need to start or at least tie their conversations to something other than one-toone

status. Schools need to first identify exactly what they want to focus on, and what they want to do exceptionally well.

Once they have done that, I would contend that one-to-one will certainly help them do a better job reaching their goals.

Businesses have certainly recognized that fact and used technology to increase productivity, accountability, creativity and pursue

important endeavors. I repeatedly tell educators that the things students can do with one-to-one technology are often

unimaginable or not easily done without the technology. With that in mind, schools

must continually come back to their goals. They can then ask whether one-to-one will

or has helped them meet their goals. They may ask themselves one or more of the following

questions depending on the goals they established.

• Is one-to-one increasing the amount and quality of what students are writing?

• Is one-to-one leveling the playing field between the haves and have-nots?

• Is one-to-one increasing the amount of project-based learning in classrooms?

• Is one-to-one helping to bolster the graduation rate?

• Is one-to-one helping to transform instruction in the school?

• Is one-to-one better preparing students with 21st century skills?

Whether you are at a current one-to-one school or are considering the move, the process described above should be essential.

In order to use one-to-one to move our schools forward, we first need to clearly identify the direction we need and want to

move! Once those goals have been established, schools can begin to align their instructional goals with the tools that will help

them better meet those goals. One of the most powerful tools to help schools reach a wide variety of those outcomes may

indeed be one-to-one.

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